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C O N F I D E N T I A L GUATEMALA 000188

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/31/2012

TAGS: PREL GT UNSC

SUBJECT: FOREIGN MINISTER'S COMMENTS ON GUATEMALA'S UNSC BID

REF: GUATEMALA 0028

Classified By: AMBASSADOR JAMES M. DERHAM FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) & (D)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY. IN JANUARY 31 CONVERSATION WITH THE AMBASSADOR, FOREIGN MINISTER BRIZ COMMENTED ON LATEST DEVELOPMENTS REGARDING GUATEMALA'S CAMPAIGN TO BE ELECTED TO THE 2007-8 UN SECURITY COUNCIL. GUARDEDLY OPTIMISTIC ABOUT GUATEMALA'S LOBBYING EFFORTS, HE REQUESTED U.S. INTERCESSION WITH PANAMA AND THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC. EMBASSY RECOMMENDS THE DEPARTMENT MEET WITH BRIZ ON FEBRUARY 10, WHEN HE WILL BE IN WASHINGTON. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C) BRIZ HAD LED GUATEMALA DELEGATION TO THE INAUGURATION OF EVO MORALES IN LA PAZ AND BRIZ USED THE VISIT TO LOBBY HIS SOUTH AMERICAN COUNTERPARTS ON GUATEMALA'S BID. BRAZIL AND ARGENTINA HAD ALREADY COMMITTED TO SUPPORT VENEZUELA, BUT BOTH FOREIGN MINISTERS CLAIMED THAT THEIR GOVERNMENTS WOULD NOT ACTIVELY CAMPAIGN FOR VENEZUELA NOR MAKE ANY NEGATIVE COMMENTS ABOUT GUATEMALA.

¶3. (C) URUGUAYAN FOREIGN MINISTER GARGANO TOLD BRIZ THAT URUGUAY HAD NOT TAKEN A POSITION, GIVING BRIZ HOPE THERE WAS AT THE LEAST THE POSSIBILITY OF URUGUAYAN SUPPORT FOR GUATEMALA. PARAGUAY FOREIGN MINISTER RACHID SAID SHE WAS FAVORABLE TO GUATEMALA'S CANDIDACY BUT ULTIMATELY PRESIDENT DUARTE FRUTOS WOULD DETERMINE PARAGUAY'S POSITION AND PRESIDENT BERGER NEEDED TO CONTACT HIS PARAGUAYAN COUNTERPART DIRECTLY.

¶4. (C) BRIZ ALSO LOBBIED THE PERUVIAN FOREIGN MINISTER. WHILE THERE WOULD BE A NEW GOVERNMENT IN PLACE IN PERU WHEN THE VOTE TAKES PLACE, BRIZ BELIEVED IT IMPORTANT NEVERTHELESS TO TRY TO GET A COMMITMENT FROM THE CURRENT GOVERNMENT. BRIZ DID NOT LOBBY THE CHILEANS BUT IS CONFIDENT GUATEMALA WILL HAVE THE SUPPORT OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT.

¶5. (C) BRIZ WAS ALSO ABLE TO HAVE CONVERSATIONS RE UNSC AT THE INAUGURATION OF PRESIDENT ZELAYA IN HONDURAS. BRIZ CONTINUES TO BE CONCERNED ABOUT PANAMA AND THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC AND SAID HE WOULD APPRECIATE ANY ASSISTANCE THE U.S. COULD PROVIDE IN SHORING UP THEIR VOTES.

¶6. (C) PRESIDENT BERGER WILL TRAVEL IN MARCH TO BRAZIL AND THEN CHILE (FOR THE BACHELET INAUGURATION), AND IN MAY TO VIENNA FOR THE EU-LATIN AMERICA SUMMIT. BOTH TRIPS WILL PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE PRESIDENT TO MAKE GUATEMALA'S CASE. BRIZ IS TRYING TO CONVINCE THE PRESIDENT TO GO TO CONGO TO VISIT GUATEMALA'S PEACEKEEPERS, BUT BRIZ ADMITS THIS IS A LONG SHOT. BRIZ COMMENTED THAT GUATEMALA'S UN AMBASSADOR, JORGE SKINNER KLEE, MADE LITTLE HEADWAY AT THE RECENT AU SUMMIT IN KHARTOUM BUT IT WAS AT LEAST A FIRST STEP. GUATEMALA HAS DECIDED AGAINST SENDING ANYONE TO THE CARIBBEAN HEADS OF GOVERNMENT ON FEBRUARY 9-10 IN TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO AS THEY UNDERSTAND IT WILL BE AN EVEN MORE CLOSED MEETING THAN THE AU.

¶7. (C) BRIZ TRAVELS TO WASHINGTON LATE FEBRUARY 9 FOR MEETINGS AT THE OAS ON BELIZE ON FEBRUARY 10. HE WOULD BE INTERESTED IN CONSULTING IN THE DEPARTMENT ON UNSC RACE ON THE 10TH OR COULD TRAVEL EARLIER ON THE 9TH FOR MEETINGS THAT DAY.

DERHAM